

Written Testimony concerning funding for implementation of Early Voting

2/14/2023

Dear Co-Chairs Senator Osten and Representative Walker, Ranking Members Senator Berthel and Representative Nuccio and members of the Committee,

I write today as a voter and voting rights advocate living in the town of Bloomfield, Connecticut. Over the last several years, I have supported and advocated on behalf of Early Voting. As you know, Connecticut has provided neither in-person Early Voting or no excuse absentee voting to the state's voters. We have been one of only 4 states to disallow such access to the franchise to eligible voters. In November 2022, the voters approved the ballot referendum question to authorize the General Assembly to provide for Early Voting. We now expect the General Assembly to move expeditiously to implement the will of the voters.

Unfortunately, HB06659, representing the Governor's budget proposal, does not include funding for implementing an Early Voting program. It is critical that the Legislature correct this oversight by adding funding. Early Voting cannot be an unfunded mandate falling exclusively on the shoulders of individual towns. Funding will be necessary in order for towns to effectuate safe and secure voting infrastructures to accommodate in-person voting before Election Day. Funding will also be necessary for a robust education campaign to alert voters to the days, hours, and locations of in-person Early Voting. The entire idea of Early Voting is to expand access to voting to the many voters whose work, family and other responsibilities make it difficult to vote on Election Day. We cannot undermine the will of the voters by failing to adequately fund the program's implementation in our cities and towns.

Sincerely,

Joan E. Twiggs, PhD  
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